



NESCA MEETING MINUTES

September 19, 2023

1. Welcome, Introductions, Announcements, Approval of Minutes:

Chair Mike Beringer opened the ZOOM meeting at 7 PM, introducing all those attending. A motion was made and seconded to approve the August meeting minutes as provided via email. Motion Carried.

2. Salem Police Officer Report: No Police Report this evening.

3. City Councilors' Report:

Virginia Stapleton Council has been busy on several items.

- Safe Salem: A very important work session was held on Monday regarding the Payroll Tax to determine what will be cut if the tax is not passed. It will be terrible for the City of Salem if these cuts must be made. While discussion of the possible cuts was devastating, it was a good conversation with everyone being respectful and listening to all points of view. Everyone was there except Julie Hoy who was on her way to Europe.
 - The work session is available on the City of Salem's YouTube channel for those who might be interested in the discussions that were held. (link provided following the Councilors' reports)
 - Virginia asked that everyone be involved, pay attention to all Safe Salem media pages and Like and Share as we feel is appropriate. Also, check out the website as there will be yard signs and opportunities to donate as well.
 - Virginia mentioned that the Koch Brothers are now involved, helping with their money to push to keep this tax from being enacted. Naturally, this will enhance the opportunities for the opposition. Council is trying to reach their modest sum of \$5000; currently around \$3700. Virginia said she felt that for the Koch Brothers to get involved, the Council must be doing something right!
- Homelessness Audit:
 - Moss Adams is the group doing the audit; all councilors have met with them individually. They are meeting with local providers, looking at all the grants, and looking at the work Salem does to support the unhoused to ensure that it is run the most efficiently, to make it the best possible. We should get the report back in the Spring.
- Updates on Shelters:
 - The Youth Shelter on Turner Road opened. There are 38 pods.
 - Catholic Community Services will be adding another 30 pods this Fall to their location on Portland Road.
- SOS Team
 - This team was created two years ago to help combat the huge amounts of trash that was around the city connected to the homeless camps.
 - There are four public employees on this team, 2 from Salem PD who are specifically trained to deal with safety and mental situations and two other city employees.
 - The team currently works four days a week and is funded by operations fees. If the payroll tax passes, they will be operational seven days a week.
 - The Salem PD officers on the team develop personal connections with many of those on the street, helping to arrange for services and housing.

- The clean-up crew is currently cleaning approximately seven tons a week.
- The SOS Team is such an asset to the community that everyone is working hard to keep it in place even with cuts that may need to be made.
- To Contact the SOS Team:
 - <https://www.cityofsalem.net/Home/Components/News/News/399/>
 - For more information on and for reporting concerns about the homeless
 - <https://www.cityofsalem.net/government/shaping-salem-s-future/housing-shelter/help-with-problem-properties/report/concerns-about-homelessness>

Linda Nishioka Will follow up on a couple of things Virginia mentioned.

- Re SOS: If connecting with the city regarding trash (link above) know that they do work with ODOT for cleaning up camps on their property.
- Community Action Unit/Homeless Service team works in conjunction with SOS.
 - Hoping that with funding it will continue.
- Council Work Session:
 - The deficit is **REAL**. Council is trying to determine where cuts can be made that will cause the least damage. Many cuts have already been made and done well enough that many people don't realize they've been made. Any new cuts that will be required will be deep and will be noticed.
 - Conversations have been good, and people are certainly now aware of the situation. All the conversations can educate the people on just what the deficit is, why it's here, etc. Linda hopes that the many conversations will help to empower the vote.
- Overlay Zones:
 - Will be discussing on Monday to remove all the zones per the motion made by Councilor Stapleton. Removal of the zones would enable high density to go along the transit corridor along South Commercial and Liberty Rd. SE.
 - SCAN doesn't like the heights that would be allowed, so hoping to find a compromise. She is hoping to be able to bring forth a subsequent motion that will have the compromise needed to allow it to go forward.
 - One zone has abutting residences so the setback for the requirements for building would leave that at the 35' height, which is the current level.
 - Two zones (3 and 5) are commercial only, no homes involved so there do not appear to be any issues. It appears these zones could be eliminated right away.
 - Zones 1 and 2 are abutting neighborhoods or homes that could fall into the National Historic Registry. These are areas Linda is trying to preserve with a 5-year sunset clause allowing the owners five years to apply for National Registry either as a neighborhood or individual homes. The limit is 45' height which has already been decided along State Street abutting a National Historic park.

Questions for the Councilors:

- Regarding the Hawthorne/Market St Park and Ride: Recently a large camp of RVs, tents, and a lot of garbage have accumulated on that corner, and no one seems to know who is responsible. ODOT? City? Cherrits? Virginia will check on this to see if we can get this issue resolved so the area can be cleaned up as it is truly an eyesore at the entrance to the city from the Market Street off ramps.
- Is there a recording of the Council budget work session that can be shared that shows the impact of the cuts that will be needed without the tax?
 - <https://www.youtube.com/live/xMuGjNtHEgU?si=7=s-0hNrKVUUIHd4>
 - City of Salem Work Session – September 18, 2023

4. Guest Speaker: State Representative Tom Andersen

Tom, an old friend of NESCA, was invited to be with NESCA this evening to bring everyone up to date on his first year as a State Representative. The two main differences between being on City Council and being in the legislature are:

1. On Council, one has the full weight of the business at hand. When he was on the Council, he figured out what he wanted to do and just bulldozed his way through, but it doesn't work that way in the legislature.
 - a. On Council one had to know everything about everything.

2. As a Representative, one must know the other legislators' agendas, the Governor's agenda, the Democratic caucus, the House leadership, and the Senate leadership. He's starting to get used to it and is enjoying it, but it is difficult at time.
 - a. As a Representative, one only has knowledge of the committees on which they serve.
 - i. The three committees Tom served on were Judiciary, Climate, Energy, and Environment, and Early Childhood Education and Human Services.

Time spent at the Legislature was greater than when on Council, biking to work every day around 7:30 and getting off around 6:30 and then often with evening meetings. He had assumed he would have more time to spend with his wife, however found that not to be true. There are more social interactions however, so his lovely wife Jessica gets to be a part of those times.

- Tom has been trying to get some money for Salem from the State to replace some of the tax money lost due to so much State of Oregon property in the city. There is approximately \$1-2B dollars' worth of state property in the city on which no tax revenue is received. He is working with Mayor Hoy, the city lobbyists, and in a bi-partisan manner with Representative Mannix, Representative Evans, Representative Kramer, and with Senator Patterson.
- Tom's main bill that he passed was the Salem streetcar system study, now back to dealing with the Governor as she vetoed the bill. This was another bipartisan and bicameral bill that he put forth to have another way for people to get around the city rather than a single occupancy vehicle.
- Tom voted against Bill 34-14 to arbitrarily expand the Urban Growth Boundaries. Tom was opposed to the bill for a couple of reasons:
 - Salem has done a good job planning for future growth. Other cities have not done as good a job and so would get bailed out for poor performance.
 - Housing would be added outside on the edges of the urban growth boundary and so the homes would either be "McMansions," which is no help for affordable housing, or it would be "affordable" and/or low-income housing, away from city transportation which would create a bad situation for those living there.
 - Except for the gun safety bill or the reproductive rights bill (both of which Tom was for), no other issue generated as many emails and calls from his constituents as the Urban Growth Boundary bill which ran 7-1 against the bill.
 - Senator Patterson (who also represents NESCA) also voted against the bill for the same reasons Tom did.
- There are many twists and turns when working in the legislature that are a bit more detailed and, at times more difficult, than when working on the City Council.
- Main news: Tom is planning to run again!
- Tom misses contact with his neighborhoods but loves to hear from everyone through email or by phone. His staff doesn't let him read his emails directly as he gets hundreds a day. They read them and send the ones on to him they consider to be most important. So, if anyone in the neighborhood wants to email, Tom said to put in the subject "Tom told me to tell you to give him this email" and he should get it.
 - Tom's website and email are listed on the State of Oregon website for the House.
- Housing:
 - Housing in unused State property.
 - There is a study happening to determine if there's any state property that could be used for, or sold for, housing.
 - Considering grants to owners of older building in downtown who wanted to convert the 2nd stories over existing businesses into apartments.
 - Questions on converting office buildings (occupancy is way down, more statewide than in Salem) to apartments:
 - Ian Johnson mentioned that if converting office buildings into apartments, a lot of issues need to be considered and due diligence is needed with developers to ensure they truly understand what it takes to convert office space into residential space. There are a lot of issues that need to be considered when doing conversions of this type.

- Mike expressed NESCA’s appreciation for all that Tom is doing on our (and others) behalf. He mentioned that he is especially appreciative of the work on trying to get money for Salem to replace lost tax revenue from all the state properties in the city.

5. Committee Reports:

a. Land Use

Ian Johnson

- Nothing new to report as he didn’t get to DAS early enough to get a response for tonight’s meeting.
 - Weeds on the back half of the Center Street property have been cut.
- The missing stop sign across Park Avenue NE from Fredrick (on The Jory property) has been put up.
- A NESCA neighbor discussed an issue regarding a CC&R (Covenants, Conditions, & Restrictions) discovered on their deed when they bought their house. The item is discriminatory in nature and the neighbor is asking how we can get the city to remove this “city regulation” from property deeds.
 - Discussion was held on the discriminatory clauses included in original titles and that they are not by city regulation, the history of such clauses, and possible ways to eliminate the clauses.
 - The NESCA Board will discuss this matter further for any needed follow-up.

b. Transportation:

Mai Vang

Mai was unable to attend this evening but sent the following report:

- Cherriots
 - Labor Day and Veterans Day will have Sunday Service.
 - UMO (electronic payment system) has been used/registered with about 80% of riders.
 - Community outreach September 26, 1:30 to 5:30 at Center 50+ regarding getting around Salem without a personal car.
- Issues – Follow up.
 - Transponders to alert riders if the buses are on time, etc.
 - No updates yet
 - Electronic signals to allow light to turn green to keep buses moving when there are only a certain number of other vehicles.
 - No updates yet
- SAMTD BD Work Session
 - Mai was unable to attend but did review meeting materials.
 - Schematic designs for South Salem Transit Center
 - Rest of September “cost estimate”

c. Parks

[no chair]

- Marilyn visited kiosks to update materials and discovered that everything at Thorpe Park had been tagged – the kiosk, benches, playground equipment. As such she couldn’t leave anything on the kiosk, but she did call the Graffiti hotline to report the damage.

d. Hoover School

Teri Lupoli

- School Supplies
 - Even though the Board voted to support the school supplies drive, only two people participated. As such, it is suggested that NESCA drop this service project in the future. No comments or discussion.
 - It was also suggested that the annual sock drive to benefit HOMES Youth Shelter should possibly be dropped. As socks are usually provided in mid-November, further discussion will be held at the October meeting to decide if we will go forward with this project.
- Back to School Night
 - Mike and Marilyn participated with Irma at the Hoover Back to School night. There was a good turnout even without a lot of notice and advertising of the date. Several names were gathered to add to the distribution list of NESCA activities, meeting agendas/minutes, and newsletters.

e. Watershed

Gary Pullman

- Gary previously reported drought conditions. He reports that things are a bit better now.
- Some of the new trees planted along D Street are suffering from lack of water (a couple have died)
- The City had a crew mowing the D Street park although, as dry as everything has been, the grass hasn't really grown very much.

f. North Campus

Ian Johnson [no additional report]

6. Other Business: Old Business

- **Pending from 8/15/2023:**
 - 25th Avenue NE – private street or not?
 - Ian has reached out to Irma Coleman for a clarification of the status of 25th Street between D and Center Street, whether it is a city street or a private road.

6. Other Business: New Business

- Election of NESCA Board, October 2023. Mike announced that he will be stepping down as Chair at the end of the October meeting. He expressed the hope that Stacey Vieyra-Braendle might be willing to place her name in nomination for the position. Stacey said she would be honored to do so.
- Ian reminded everyone of the new By-Law regarding the variable size board (5, 7, or 9) and that we need to discuss this prior to the election as to how many we will have. He also pointed out that it must be an odd number to eliminate tie votes.
- Teri will remind Irma that the October meeting is our Annual election to verify that she will be able to be in attendance, ensuring that we do all that we are supposed to.

7. Discussion/Questions/Comments

There being no further business, Mike thanked everyone for their attendance. The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 PM. **The next scheduled NESCA meeting will be held via ZOOM on October 17th beginning at 7:00 PM. The ZOOM meeting link will be provided to those on the NESCA email distribution list prior to the meeting.** The link will also be available on the city website. Next month will be the NESCA Annual meeting with the election of the new board. Guest speaker for this meeting is currently pending.

Submitted by: Teri Lupoli
NESCA Secretary/Treasurer

Attending:

Mike Beringer*, Marilyn Moritz*, Teri Lupoli*, Lynn Cardiff*, Gary Pullman*, Stacey Vieyra-Braendle*, Ian Johnson, Jim Lupoli, Ken Gettys, Virginia Stapleton Salem City Council, Linda Nishioka Salem City Council, Tom Andersen State Representative

*NESCA Board Members

- **Other Website Information:**

- To report homeless camping: <https://form.cityofsalem.net/s3/homeless-camping-complaint>
- To report homeless concerns: <https://www.cityofsalem.net/pages/report-concerns-about-homeslessness.aspx>
- To sign up for weekly updates regarding homeless: <https://www.cityofsalem.net/pages/tracking-progress-on-homeslessness-efforts.aspx>
- To report graffiti: <https://www.cityofsalem.net/pages/report-graffiti.aspx>
 - [503-371-4262 Graffiti Response team](https://www.cityofsalem.net/pages/report-graffiti.aspx)
- The link for the crime statistics: www.cityofsalem.net/crime-stats